

Notes from the Biographical Archive:

MILDRED J. "BARRIE" BERRYMAN (1901-1972)

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Mildred "Barrie" Berryman ran a mineral business in Utah in the 1940s, offering "superb specimens" for the collector. She was an active field collector, an accomplished professional photographer, and a long-time member of various women's organizations. Her posthumously published memoirs of her early life are today considered to be important contributions to the study of homosexuality.

The Berryman Menage was a 1940s mineral and lapidary dealership in Salt Lake City and Wood's Cross, Utah. Their first ad appeared in the October 1940 issue of *The Mineralogist*, announcing the opening of their new mineral showroom in their Salt Lake City residence at 412 East 9th. Subsequent ads appeared in *Rocks & Minerals* beginning in July 1941, offering "Superb Utah azurite" and "New Bingham pyrite." More ads appeared in *The Mineralogist* in February–May (Salt Lake City address) and September–December (Wood's Cross address) 1943. In April 1943 they offered "Superb specimens, limited quantity, amethystine quartz crystal groups, Arizona chrysocolla, Pyrite and quartz groups (Bingham)." In May they advertised gordonite and associated minerals from Fairfield, Utah. In September, following the move to Wood's Cross, they offered "Four museum specimens, Cumberland, England Hematites. \$50.00 each—weighing 18 to 24 pounds each." Their price list/bulletin in 1944 was called *Berryman's Rock Pile*.

But who was "The Berryman Menage" ("ménage" meaning "household" in this case)? According to the Salt Lake City Directory, the 412 East 9th address corresponds to the address of Richard G. Berryman Sr. and his two children, Richard Berryman, Jr. and Mildred J. "Barrie" Berryman—of whom the principal movers in the mineral business appear to have been Richard Sr. and Barrie.

Richard Gordon Berryman Sr. was born November 28, 1862 in Tronis, England, the son of William and Mamie Rowe Berryman.

He emigrated from England with his family in 1867, and settled first in New Jersey. In the 1880s he drove a wagon across the country to the Rocky Mountains and settled in Colorado Springs, then worked several years as a miner near Leadville, an occupation that introduced him to minerals and geology. He was also one of the first vigilantes in that area. While in Colorado, he met Mildred Stokes, a New York-born actress (daughter of George W. Stokes) who was touring the United States. Richard and Mildred were married in Colorado Springs in 1892 and lived there for two more years before moving to Salt Lake City, Utah, where Richard first got work as a bartender for the Utah Liquor Company, located in the heart of Salt Lake City's red light district. They had three children: George (1896), Richard Jr. (1898), and Mildred Jessie "Barrie" Berryman (1901).

Barrie's mother Mildred died in 1910, of cirrhosis of the liver, suggesting that she had been a heavy drinker—a risk when married to a bartender. After his wife's death, Richard Sr. and his children moved into the home at 412 East and 900 South. Richard Sr. continued working at the Utah Liquor Company until 1913, when he got a job tending bar at Hanak and Rumph, later called "the Opera Buffet" and "the Opera Bar." He worked there until the 1920s when Prohibition forced him out of his job. In its earlier days, the Opera Bar had a significant homosexual clientele.

Barrie Berryman entered Westminster College (a private school owned and run by the Presbyterian Church) in Salt Lake City in



Figure 1. Mildred J. "Barrie" Berryman.

1916, less than a month after turning 15. She lived in the all-female dormitory on campus, and enrolled in classes in the Bible, English, German, Art, Geography, History, and Spelling. Barrie then came out as a lesbian, and announced that she wanted to do an academic thesis study of lesbianism. This threw the college into an uproar, and several other female students were pulled out of school by their families. Although the faculty refused her thesis request, she was not expelled; traumatized by the scandal, however, she ran away at 16 and married a man in order to try to escape her homosexuality, but the marriage ended quickly. She continued her studies until 1919, and may have taken introductory classes in geology, mineralogy and chemistry.

In 1920 Barrie took a job as a stenographer, intending to devote herself to writing and science. In 1924 she worked for the De Lux Photo Company, where her brother also worked, and she later became a commercial photographer for the Superior Photo Company. Her father meanwhile began working at the Wasatch Municipal Hot Springs, where he would eventually become the engineering foreman, and worked there until his health failed in 1942.

Barrie, who was small and petite, loved wearing riding boots and masculine clothes. She was a long-time resident of a lesbian boarding house for several years, and had several female relationships in succession. In 1929 she moved back home with her brother and father, where she began writing her thesis on homosexuality (through which she hoped eventually to obtain a PhD), developing case studies of 24 women (including herself) and nine men.

By 1936 Barrie was doing so well as a photographer that she was able to open up her own studio in the family residence, and had a new live-in female partner. Nevertheless, while making her living as a photographer, Barrie aspired to be an author and scientist, probably a geologist. It is likely that her father had collected minerals since his mining days, and she now appears to have become involved as well, particularly in the lapidary and jewelry end. They opened a mineral and lapidary showroom in their home (which already housed Barrie's photography studio) in 1940.

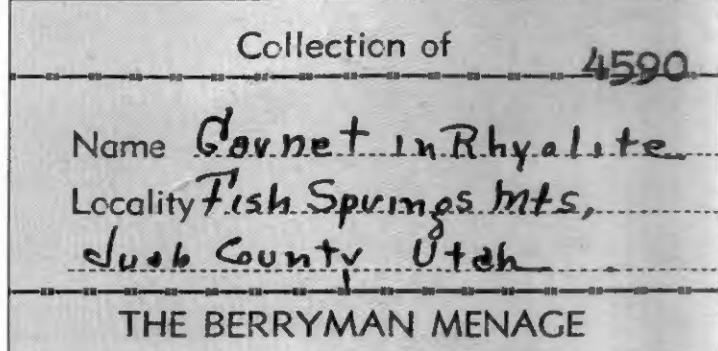


Figure 2. Specimen label from the Berryman collection.

ANNOUNCING . . .

The opening of our new mineral display room. Find the choicest Utah minerals, polishing materials, cabochons — stop and see us.

The Berryman Menage
412 E. 9th So. Salt Lake City

Figure 3. October 1940 ad in *The Mineralogist* announcing the opening of Berryman's first shop in Salt Lake City.

Barrie continued her work as a photographer until 1941 or 1942, when wartime necessities led her into the defense industry. While working at a small arms factory, she met Ruth Uckerman Dempsey, a divorced Mormon housewife who was working at the same plant. They began what was to be a long-term relationship.

In the summer of 1941, Barrie, as a member of the Mineralogical Society of Utah, traveled to Denver to attend the annual convention of the Rocky Mountain Federation of Mineral Societies. There, she was honored to be chosen as the new secretary-treasurer for the federation. Barrie was re-elected to the same position the following year when the federation's annual convention was held in Salt Lake City.

In the July 1940 issue of *The Mineralogist*, M. Barrie Berryman provided a competent article about a field trip by the Utah Mineralogical Society (of which she was an enthusiastic member) to the Wildcat Mountains in search of fluorite, and another article in the July 1943 issue on "A Utah Locality." Editor Henry Dake mentioned that she "collects minerals and has a home lapidary

FOUR MUSEUM SPECIMENS

Cumberland, Eng. Hematites, \$50.00 each — weighing 18 to 24 pounds each. To our friends: We are once more in operation and able to supply cabochons in quantity. Lots of large variety materials reasonable. Write for information and prices.

THE BERRYMAN MENAGE
Route 1, Box 46 Woods Cross, Utah

Figure 4. September 1943 ad in *The Mineralogist* offering fine Cumberland, England hematite specimens.

ALL UTAH SPECIAL

\$1.00 plus 6c postage

1 CABOCHON SUITABLE FOR
MOUNTING AND SPECIMEN IN
THE ROUGH. CHOICE OF

AGATE

White — Light Blue — Pigeon Blood

JASPER

Red and Yellow San Rafael

MISCELLANEOUS

Gordonite and its associate minerals

We also have left a splendid selection
of Crystallized Minerals ranging in
price from 10c to \$25.00 (Minimum
Order \$1.00.)

Some of the outstanding numbers
are: Pyrite and Quartz, Fluorite, Cal-
cite, Molybdenite and Actinolite, Real-
gar and Orpiment.

THE BERRYMAN MENAGE

412 East 9th South

Salt Lake City, Utah

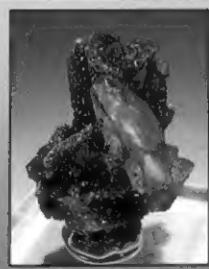
Figure 5. May 1943 ad in *The Mineralogist* offering
“a splendid selection of crystallized minerals.”

shop.” A year later, she took part in a ten-day field trip to the Uintah Basin, co-sponsored by the University of Utah, Utah State Agricultural College (now Utah State University), and Brigham Young University. She published a report of the trip in a local paper (*Vernal Express*, December 14, 1944). The expedition visited petroglyph and pictogram sites, other ancient native archaeological sites, dinosaur fossil fields, oil fields, ice caves, and museums on the Colorado and Utah border of the basin.

When Barrie and her ailing father moved up to Woods Cross (where the Berryman Menage advertised from, beginning in December 1943), a rural area just north of Salt Lake City, Ruth decided to move with her. In addition to the Berryman Menage business, Ruth and Barrie began their own manufacturing company there, making tourist items for Indian jewelry, carved plastic items for displays, ribbons for fairs, etc. out of their shop, which they called “Berryman Novelty Manufacturing.” They probably continued the family mineral sales from there as well. However, the ads for the Berryman Menage in *The Mineralogist* cease abruptly after December 1944, marking the death of Barrie’s father.

Richard Berryman died on January 5, 1945 (services were provided by St. Paul’s Episcopal Church). Ruth and Barrie Berryman stayed together for 33 years. Mildred Jessie “Barrie” Berryman died of natural causes on November 7, 1972 at the age of 71. Her obituary states that she was a member of the Bountiful Community Church (Congregational/Episcopal), past president of the Business and Professional Women organization, and past president of the American Legion Auxiliary. Her thesis was ultimately published posthumously, at least in part, in the 1978 issue of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, and is today considered a valuable early study in homosexuality. ☐

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